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6pm-6:30pm in Wellness Studio

Meditation
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MMA Fit
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PHOTO HIGHLIGHT

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Nate Pappas | Visual Editor

A group of children dance during the Indiana State Museum's Family New Year's Eve Party Saturday, Dec. 31, at the Indiana State Museum.

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Hillel at CMU to honor Jewish Heritage Week

Masha Smahliuk
Staff Reporter

Courtesy graphic | Hillel at CMU

At Central Michigan University, students embrace diversity, culture and spread awareness of important histories. Hillel is a Jewish student organization at CMU.

For the first time since 2019, CMU will host events celebrating Jewish heritage and honoring Holocaust Rememberance Day, this month. However, getting the events on the calendar was challenging.

Elizabeth Slater, a CMU junior and Hillel member, had five events in mind for Jewish Heritage Week, which leads up to International Holocaust Remembrance Day on Jan. 27. She presented them to the Multicultural Academic Student Services (MASS) in September for approval.

After two months of conversation, MASS told Hillel the events were too religious. The Division of Student Affairs got involved in early December, and eventually the events gained full support from CMU.

Stan Shingles, assistant vice president of Student Affairs, said the miscommunication happened from both sides.

"There was a lot of misunderstanding and miscommunication," Shingles said, "but then we ... put all the folks in place to support the (events)."

Jamie Haisma, a CMU senior and president of Hillel, said five events will be on Jewish Heritage Week, starting Jan. 23: Soup and Substance, Jewish culture through food, a Holocaust survivor guest speaker, Dreidel game night and Jewish culture trivia night.

What is Jewish Heritage Week?

Haisma said Jewish Heritage Week is a week of events Hillel plans before Holocaust Remembrance Day. According to the United Nations General Assembly, Holocaust Remembrance Day is a day to honor victims of the Holocaust -- 6 million Jewish people and others who died from Nazi persecution.

Haisma said her goals were to educate people about the Holocaust and share Jewish culture.

"It's not like it's Christmas," Haisma said. "It's not like we are celebrating anything. It's a day of remembrance."

Another important thing that was driving Hillel at CMU to set events and bring awareness is a rise of antisemitism in the United States and people being uneducated about the Holocaust as a result of the lack of awareness. According to the New York-based think tank the Anti-Defamation League, in 2021, the most recent year for which data is available, there were 2,717 antisemitic incidents throughout the United States.

"This is a 34% increase from the 2,026 incidents tabulated in 2020 and the highest number on record since ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979," according to the league's "Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2021."

Slater presented reasons for holding the events to MASS Assistant Director Alfred Harper III. She provided her presentation to Central Michigan Life.

In it, Slater argued that Jewish Heritage Week was important for Hillel members at CMU because there are "very few Jewish students on campus, with little representation or support."

Andrew Frantz is a minister at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Central Michigan in Mount Pleasant. He said it is important for people to have representation in their communities, and that people without proper representation feel isolated.

"Living with this knowledge that (Jewish people) have been persecuted, the fear that could happen again, and that's something that is true for all Jewish people," Frantz said. "It should be true for all humans; it should be something that's fresh in our mind today.

"It happens when we let down our guard as human communities in terms of embracing one another in our differences. Expressions of heritage for different religious and cultural groups ... is the antidote to the hatred and divisions."

Slater also said she has noticed a lack of awareness of correct terms used in certain academic classes like Cultural and Global Studies, Race in Higher Education and Culture and Civilization of Spain. For example, "Jew" and "Jewish," "semitism" and "antisemitism," or "race" and "ethnicity."

What events were planned?

Haisma said she and other Hillel members first met in-person with Harper in September when they introduced themselves and discussed Slater's presentation.

Hillel had five events planned, one event for each day of the week.

"We weren't trying to put (on) religious events, we wanted to advocate strictly for the cultural side of Judaism," Haisma said. "We wanted to bring more awareness to (Judaism) and the differences, especially with the rising antisemitism, we wanted people to learn a little bit more about it."

Frantz said it is important not only for a diversity group, but also to a whole community, to have events that bring awareness to other cultures.

"Any human community is diverse in what people believe," Frantz said. "It's important to have a diversity of religions within the community, and I think it enriches all of us. ... It opens our minds and gives us new ideas and perceptions in life."

MASS advocates for diversity and inclusion and supports students in academic, cultural and social opportunities through scholarships, programs and mentoring.

"To empower and retain students, the MASS team provides and enhances a campus environment where diversity is understood and celebrated," the MASS website reads.

MASS offers the Multicultural Advancement and Cofers (MAC) scholars program, holds events for cultural heritage months and funds events that spread awarness about diversity.

Slater said Hillel wanted to gain support from MASS because Hillel at CMU is a small organization with around 15 members, and they were not able to put on any events recently. She said MASS' support was a "general safety" to encourage MAC scholars to register and attend. MASS can help provide an organization with resources such as booking space, giving funding, promoting posters and requiring MAC scholars come to events.

Haisma said it is important for Hillel members to remember the Holocaust, share Jewish culture through food and dreidel and have people feel welcome to participate.

How did the conversation start?

Haisma said after meeting with Harper in September, she was under the impression that MASS would approve Hillel's events, because Harper agreed to meet again and discuss organizing the events.

The conversation was followed with emails where Harper, Haisma and two other Hillel members were setting time to meet in person to discuss planning the events. Hillel members provided the emails to Central Michigan Life.

On Nov. 19, Harper replied that the MASS office was not able to support Jewish Heritage Week events because the events seemed to be too religious. However, he still encouraged Haisma and her group to hold events as a registered student organization. According to

the Registered Student Organization guide, Hillel is able to book a classroom and organize an events.

Nevertheless, Harper wrote in an email to Haisma that he is open to "continuing to discuss these events to be available for (MAC Scholars) to attend for possible make-up credit, as they will occur during the semester."

He told Central Michigan Life in an email that MASS is supporting the events.

"We are providing support as needed to assist Hillel with providing cultural education of the Jewish Heritage for our campus community," Harper wrote. "The MASS office will support this heritage week of cultural programming events by requiring our MAC scholars to attend events for their scholarship protocol."

Shingles supervises the office of Student Activities and Involvement and MASS office at CMU. He said Harper is new to the MASS office, and added that it is the first time events are being set for Jewish Heritage Week. Shingles said Harper was first trying to understand his role and if the administrative office could program proposed events.

"They've never been asked to do (Jewish Heritage Week) program before this year," Shingles said. "The (MASS office) was asked to do it and didn't really know that was an area that they should be programming. I think that's where some of the communication came in."

In an email to Hillel, Harper said that the reason why MASS would not support the events is that Jewish culture is too connected to a religion, and MASS does not work with religions.

"Jewish culture is an identity closely recognized to religion," Harper said in the email. "As an office, we must be mindful of our entire student population regarding beliefs and how that can cause other faiths to want to be displayed."

However, according to the MASS website, MASS approved Introduction to Ramadan and Ramadan Reflection events during the Arab Heritage Month. Ramadan is a religious holiday in Islam.

Shingles said Student Affairs does not program any religious events. Events for Ramadan were performed by students. He said it is different because students took the role of responsibility instead of the administrative office. Another example he gave was if Christ Central Choir were to sing for a Black History Month, that would be a student organization performing.

Haisma said that Hillel was not trying to promote any religious events.

"They aren't events that promote any sort of religious text or context or ideas that are used in Judaism," Haisma said. "They're just about the culture of the people themselves, not the belief system."

Differences between Jewish culture and religion

Frantz said that Jewish culture and religion are very connected. He said Judaism is more of an identity with people and tradition, rather than, say, Christianity that is associated with biblical studies. Judaism is an ethnic religion.

"My understanding of Judaism is that to be Jewish is to identify with people and with the traditions of those people," Frantz said.

"Culture and religion are very closely connected, and we understand that," Slater said. "We're not saying we want to take it away from other cultures to not share the religions. We just want to say that you're allowing other students and other cultures and religions to be represented."

Frantz said that people in America are not used to openly talking and working with religions because of a separation of the church and state in American culture. He said that in contrast, talking about different religions openly would help people be open-minded and learn to embrace the diversity.

"I think that sometimes in the name of separation of church and state people take that a little too far and say that 'we're never going to talk about religion,'" Frantz said. "Whereas I think we should talk about religion in that open way. Not that 'you have to believe what I believe,' but 'I'd love to hear what you believe.' That's not harmful if we are doing it in an open-minded way."

How did MASS decide to approve the events?

Haisma said that she talked to Hillel Campus Alliance of Michigan (HCAM) Jewish Student Life Coordinator, Nicki Borovsky who works under HCAM Executive Director Cindy Hughey. Haisma said Hughey got support from CMU President Bob Davies, who asked MASS to work with Hillel.

Shingles said Hillel contacted different departments at CMU, such as the President's office, the Provost's office and the Division of Student Affairs. He said his division, Student Affairs, is the one that helps with issues such as students trying to set up events; that's why Vice President of Student Affairs Reneé Watson appointed him to supervise the issue.

Shingles said as soon as he heard about the program, he assembled a meeting with Hillel and his office. It took place in the first week of December. Then after,-student Affairs supported Hillel's events.

"There's challenges with planning every event we have on campus because it's not a plug-and-play; it's not an exact science," Shingles said. "There's people involved, there's communication."

Shingles said the Office of Student Activities and Involvement and MASS are assisting Hillel with the events. He said the offices helping with funding, facilities, setup and catering.

Where do we go from here?

Haisma said all events are taking place during Jewish Heritage Week. All five got approval, but only three of them will require MAC scholars' participation, Haisma said.

The events, according to Hillel documentation, are:

- Soup & Substance: Antisemitism in the U.S.: 6 to 8 p.m. Jan. 23, UC Rotunda.
- Jewish Cultural Food Night: 6 p.m. Jan. 24, UC Rotunda
- Holocaust Remembrance Night: 5 to 8 p.m. Jan. 25, Location TBA
- Dreidel Night: 5 to 6 p.m. Jan. 26, Location TBA
- Jewish Trivia: 1 to 2 p.m. Jan. 27, Kulhavi 141

Shingles said he and Hillel members will be having a meeting soon to finalize the events.

Segall said that the events are meaningful to her and she appreciated an opportunity to educate people and talk about how antisemitism affects the community.

"It's frustrating that it needed to happen, but I am glad that we finally got to them (MASS), and they might be able to help in what is gonna be impactful events," Segall said.

"I hope that this week is successful," Shingles said. "I hope that the university community engages in it, and that there's a lot we learned about our Jewish students and our Hillel organization.

Marie Underwood | Staff Photographer

Updates to CMU's COVID-19 practices

Staff Reports

President Bob Davies announced updates to Central Michigan University's COVID-19 practices, including ending the requirement to self-report health information and discontinuing on-campus quarantine housing.

"We are updating our COVID-19 practices to better align with the practices of our local health partners, as well as those of many of our peer institutions of higher education," Davies said in a Jan. 4 email. "These changes also are consistent with state and national trends and the patterns we have seen on campus over the last year."

On-campus vaccines and testing will continue to be offered.

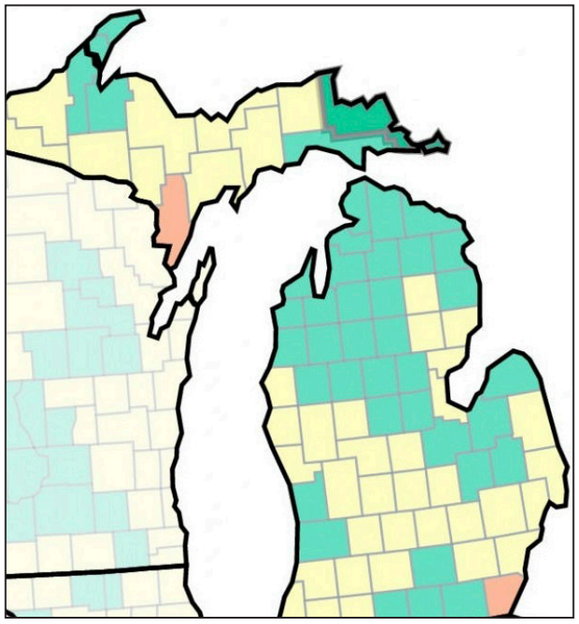
No requirement to self-report

CMU no longer requires students, faculty and staff to report COVID-19 symptoms or positive test results using the health screening app. Instead, for any COVID-related health concerns, the email said to contact a health care provider and visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) COVID-19 webpage for information on testing and quarantine.

"With the widespread availability of at-home COVID-19 tests and the challenges of collecting data on new cases, many public health organizations have shifted practice and no longer require individual case reporting or contact tracing," Davies said in the email. "Please do not come to campus if you are sick or have tested positive for COVID-19."

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 should stay home for at least five days. Use the CDC's isolation and exposure calculator to help you determine how long to isolate.

The email said, as with any other illness, it is your responsibility to notify your instructors and/or supervisor that you are unable to attend class or work.



Courtesy image | CDC
Isabella County is considered 'low' in terms of COVID-19, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

An end to on-campus quarantine

Based on updated CDC guidelines, CMU will no longer offer quarantine and isolation housing for residential students.

"This step already has been taken by many of CMU's peer institutions of higher education, and it is consistent with the decline in demand for on-campus isolation housing over the past year," Davies said in the email.

Students who feel sick should limit non-essential contact with others, follow CDC guidelines and contact their preferred health care provider if symptoms persist or worsen.

Residential students who have questions about this change may contact the Office of Residence Life by calling 989-774-3111.

Vaccines, testing and masks

Primary and bivalent COVID-19 vaccines will continue to be offered at the University Health Services Clinic in Foust

New COVID-19 Cases Per 100,000 people in the past 7 days	Indicators	Low	Medium	High
Fewer than 200	New COVID-19 admissions per 100,000 population (7-day total)	<10.0	10.0-19.9	≥20.0
	Percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients (7-day average)	<10.0%	10.0-14.9%	≥15.0%
200 or more	New COVID-19 admissions per 100,000 population (7-day total)	NA	<10.0	≥10.0
	Percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients (7-day average)	NA	<10.0%	≥10.0%

Courtesy graphic | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Hall. More information about vaccinations and the virus can be found online.

Testing options have become widely available. At-home testing kits are available for online order from covid.gov. Find at-home kits and in-person testing sites listed on the State of Michigan's website.

CMU will continue to offer testing services on-campus for students, faculty and staff. Visit CMU's COVID-19 testing webpage for more information about clinic hours and test options.

Like in the fall 2022 semester, masks will continue to be optional in all outdoor and most indoor spaces on campus. Some locations, as mandated by state or federal guidelines, will require masks to be worn.

According to the CDC, 46.9% of the total population in Isabella County has received at least one dose of the vaccine and 45.8% have completed the primary series, meaning a series of three monovalent COVID-19 vaccines.

By the numbers

Isabella County has a low COVID-19 community level, according to the CDC's COVID-19 Data Tracker. Each county is rated low, medium or high.

A low community level occurs when there are less than 10 new COVID-19 admissions for 100,000 people (per seven-day total) and less than 10% of staffed inpatient beds are occupied by COVID-19 patients (per seven-day average).

Since Jan. 4, there have been 35 new cases and less than 10 deaths in Isabella County.

About half of the 68 counties in the lower peninsula of Michigan have a medium COVID-19 community level. The other half, primarily in the northern part of the lower peninsula, have a low community level.

In the upper peninsula, nine out of the 15 counties have a medium community level, leaving five with a low level. Both the upper and lower peninsula have one county each with a high community level.

For more information and resources on COVID-19 in the community, visit the Central Michigan District Health Department.

Sports Prediction

What's next for CMU basketball?

Megan Youngblood and Kaia Zimmerman
Staff Reporters

Marie Underwood | Staff Photographer

Graduate student forward Nadége Jean drives to the basket during a game against Cleveland State on Thursday, Dec. 8 in McGuirk Arena.

Marie Underwood | Staff Photographer

(From left) Freshman forward Ola Ajiboye, freshman guard Reggie Bass, sophomore guard Kevin Miller and freshman forward Caleb Atewe celebrate after defeating Michigan 63-61 Dec. 29.

Following the first week of Mid-American Conference games, the Central Michigan University men's and women's basketball teams both seemed to be on the rise after promising MAC openers.

On the men's side, the Chippewas are 6-10 overall and 1-2 in the MAC under second-year head coach Tony Barbee. After upsetting the Michigan Wolverines in late December, the team seemed to finally be showcasing what it has been aiming to do all season. But with the 315th youngest team in the country, the team is left with some cracks to fill.

The Women's team had a slow start in the win column this season as they sit at 3-10 overall and 1-1 in the MAC as of deadline. Fourth-year head coach Heather Oesterle has relied on the freshman class to step up to get things sparked within the team. With veteran player Jahari Smith absent from the lineup due to injury, Oesterle has looked to a few transfers to lead the young team into conference play.

To discuss the futures of both teams, Central Michigan Life asked men's basketball beat reporter Megan Youngblood and women's basketball beat reporter Kaia Zimmerman their thoughts on each team.

Who has been the best player on each team?

Youngblood: Senior guard Brain Taylor has been the best player for Central Michigans men's basketball thus far this season. Taylor leads the Chippewas with 231 points and has started all 16 games. He's been a dominating force for CMU, averaging 14.4 points per game and 35 minutes on the court. Taylor is not only a leader points wise, but he is one of three seniors setting an example for the young Chippewas squad.

Zimmerman: Freshman guard Sydney Harris has burst onto the scene in her first year as a Chippewa and has become the go-to for Central Michigan women's basketball. Harris is leading the scoring effort, averaging 16.4 points per game through 13 games. She ranks fourth in the nation in three-pointers per game, with 3.23.

What are the team's strengths?

Youngblood: Rebounding is CMU's biggest strength this season. The Chippewas are ranked second in the MAC in combined team rebounds. On average, CMU records 38.3 rebounds, compared to their opponents recording 36 per game putting them at a 2.3 margin above their opponents.

Zimmerman: I think the Chippewas' biggest strength is they have both a strong inside and outside presence that can create issues for other teams. On the outside, Harris has been consistent from the three-point line, along with freshman guard Bridget Utberg who averages 9.8 points per game. However, on the inside, junior center Rochelle Norris has become a key target for offensive production, securing back-to-back double doubles in the first two conference games. In the last three games, the Chippewas' ability to share the load between the inside and outside was their greatest strength.

What are each team's weaknesses?

Youngblood: For the men's basketball team, its biggest weakness is staying healthy. Since the beginning of the season, the Chippewas have been without multiple key players. Throughout the season, CMU has been without sophomore guard Kevin Miller who was the Chippewas' leading scorer last year and was named to the All-MAC preseason team this year, as well as freshman guard Emil Skytta for undisclosed injuries. Another weakness that the Chippewas struggle with is turnovers. CMU has a total of 259 turnovers on the season and an average of 16.2 per game.

Zimmerman: An issue the women's basketball team has faced this season is turnovers. Through the 13-game stretch, the Chippewas have 249 turnovers compared to their opponents' 189. This leads to scoring opportunities for other teams, as their opponents average 18.6 points off of turnovers per game.

Down the stretch, who is the key player for the team?

Youngblood: A key player for the Chippewas is freshman guard Reggie Bass. In the absence of Miller, Bass has been the one that CMU leans on, starting in 14 of the 16 Chippewas' games. He averages 9.4 points per game, with a total of 150 points. A key moment thus far for Bass's game was netting the game-winning three pointer to take down University of Michigan.

Zimmerman: The key player for CMU as it continues MAC play is Norris. In the first two conference games of the season, Norris put up a total of 42 points, 25 rebounds and six blocks, earning her MAC Player of the Week honors. She creates the inside presence that Oesterle has been hoping to get going this season, so if she can stay hot, she will be a powerful force in the MAC.

How do you see each team finishing the season?

Youngblood: At the end of the season, I see the men's basketball team finishing in the middle of the MAC and securing a spot in the MAC tournament. If the Chippewas are able to stay healthy and get Miller and Skytta back in the lineup, CMU could give other teams in the MAC a run for their money.

Zimmerman: After a slow start to the season, I think the Chippewas started to find their groove more as they headed into MAC play. I do see them going above .500 in the conference and having a chance to sneak in the MAC tournament at the end of the season.

Define your next normal as we begin the new year

The power is in your hands, let's take on 2023 together

EDITORIAL

We made it to yet another year where the phrase "new normal" seems to, again, define an unknown number of days, weeks and months to come. For almost three years, we have become accustomed to waiting on the next outbreak, variant or, let's be real, the next bad news.

What is the new normal? In 2020, we were forced online. In 2021, vaccinations began while masks remained commonplace. In 2022, we returned to work and class without masks.

Now, as we begin 2023, it's a blank slate.

Whether you're a professor, student or employee in the community, there has not been a person or group left unaffected by COVID-19.

In times like these, when it's easy to be overcome by the sadness in the world, it's even more important to focus on what we have learned from the pandemic.

Aside from easing communication worldwide, the pandemic has taught us that the "new normal" is ever-changing.

This is such a vital time in young adults' lives. We are learning and experiencing things that can affect our lives forever.

Take with you in this new year the lesson that the word "normal" is whatever you allow it to be. We've been so focused on the new normal, but what about the *next* normal?

President Bob Davies recently announced that COVID-19 practices on campus will come to an end, aside from optional testing and vaccinations. Regulations are as relaxed as they have been since the pandemic began.

The power is in your hands. Let's take on 2023 together and conquer this next normal phase of life.

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OPINION

The Golden Globes had too few categories

Michael Gonzalez

Podcast Editor

No, the Golden Globes weren't all bad. Seeing Ke Huy Quan's speech for winning Best Supporting Actor moved me to tears. Seeing Michelle Yeoh, "Abbott Elementary" — and the many actors in it — win, I was overjoyed to watch each person walk up to accept their award.

But that doesn't mean the awards were all good, either.

When I looked at the nominations before the award ceremony, I was met with confusion and one question: Did the voting board watch these movies and shows? Because from what I saw, they didn't know what the movie "The Menu" was or how the HBO show "Barry" had morphed into more of a drama rather than a comedy.

I first noticed that Ralph Fiennes, who played the head chef in "The Menu," was nominated for best actor in a musical or comedy and I had to take a minute to wrap my head around that choice.

In no way is "The Menu" a comedy or musical. Sure, it had some funny moments here and there, but it was, without a doubt, a thriller. Not to spoil anything about this fantastic movie, but Ralph Fiennes' character is nothing but cold and ruthless towards his evening guests. For the entire length of the film I was on the edge of my seat, left in suspense and wondering what would happen next.

This isn't meant to be some review for The Menu — even if I heavily recommend it; but it's meant to show just how confusing the choices were in categories and nominations.

Another example of these archaic decisions would be the dark-comedy-turned-drama, "Barry." In its first two seasons, the show walked a thin line between its comedic characters and scenarios of a depressed hitman finding joy in the acting scene of Hollywood, and its melancholy, gut-wrenching moments that made it an instant classic. After about three years, it released a season in 2022 to much praise, even though the show seems to be evolving into a much heavier drama rather than a dark-comedy.

In fact, the first two seasons had more comedy with peppered-in moments of drama. It appears season 3 and the upcoming season 4 will mirror its first half of the series with more drama and peppered-in moments of comedy.

It seems like the board did not take that tone shift into account, as it is still classified as a comedy first-and-foremost. Bill Hader was nominated for best performance in a comedy television show.

To see the latest rendition of "Barry" in season 3 sit right next to Steve Martin and Martin Short's characters in "Only Murders in the Building" is off-putting. This and "The Menu" were large elephants in the room.

And, unfortunately, they weren't the only elephants.

Diego Luna's titular character in "Andor," the powerful sci-fi drama set in the galaxy of "Star Wars," was pitted against — and lost to — T.V. acting giants like Bob Odenkirk's Saul Goodman and Kevin Costner's John Dutton. I'm not saying that Luna's acting doesn't compare to any other nominated actors — far from it — but big names like Quentin Tarantino and Martin Scorsese blame brands such as Marvel and Star Wars for disrupting the quality of movies and, in turn, television shows.

It's a big deal if someone is even nominated for an award if their character or story is attached to a big-name blockbuster brand, as there is a unspoken stigma against this type of media. In fact, Angela Bassett made history by being the first person to ever win a Golden Globe or any major award for a Marvel movie with her performance in "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever".

To put it in perspective, Marvel started its long-running universe in 2008. Every movie featured critically-acclaimed stars and, since its beginning, has gotten four of its movies into the top 10 highest grossing movies of all time. On Wednesday night, the saga just got its first major award for acting.

There's an opinion among many fans, including myself, that these blockbuster brands do not merit quality acting or stories due to their culture of churning out content to make profit. That doesn't mean some of that content shouldn't be celebrated!

I think that there should be categories for these brands and actors, alongside a few changes to the Golden Globes' categories so we don't get those confusing moments with "Barry" and "The Menu."

It was a shame to see Luna not get an award for his acting because, for "Star Wars" especially, it was a compelling performance.

And it's not just him. The entire show deserves praise for going against the status quo of its brand. It gives fans a story that's filled with relatable characters and important examples to really show why the galaxy rebelled against the fascist Galactic Empire. These themes and slow-building pieces built a story that was more magical and empowering than anything "Star Wars" has put out in the past 20 years.

These creative choices deserve to be celebrated so that leaders of these blockbuster brands know that their routine churning of content usually doesn't produce quality pieces.

I'm so happy to see Bassett win her acting award — and honoring Chadwick Boseman in her acceptance speech. I hope that the Golden Globes can share these moments with more Marvel and "Star Wars" actors and actresses when it calls for it.

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Ponder Coffee Company expands to Health Professions Building

By Elijah Fosmore and Lauren Rice
Staff Reporters

The Health Professions Building on campus at Central Michigan University is a quiet and focused space. Down one of the first-floor hallways, however, is a warm coffee shop, full of customers and the hum of various machines. A red and black mural presents itself across from wooded shelves holding plants.

CMU student Lily McLean said this new location is useful to her.

"I have a lot of classes here, and I need my coffee," McLean said.

Ponder Coffee began expanding through Mount Pleasant in the fall of 2018, opening its second location near campus on Franklin Street. In 2021 they moved into the Park Library in the former Java City Coffee location. On Jan. 9, Ponder Coffee opened its newest location in the Health Professions Building on campus.

Opening this new location is not something a lot of small businesses would have been capable of, in the wake of the recent pandemic. According to Austin American Statesman, through the pandemic, there were 37.5% fewer small businesses open nationwide, compared to January of 2020, two months before the pandemic hit the United States.

CMU student Matty Barrow attributed their success to community support and other factors.

"I think it's the community outreach," Barrow said. "They're more than enough quality to sustain themselves."

Brendan White, a Ponder Coffee employee and junior at CMU was excited about the new location opening and happy that Ponder Coffee is doing well enough to open a fourth location.

While most employees will remain at their respective locations, some staff have switched locations to facilitate the opening of the new site. White was not one of them.

"I know we've kind of rearranged the scheduling and moved people around to facilitate (the opening of the new location), so that we don't have new people exclusively in that location, and keep things running smooth," he said.

Regarding the decision to open a new location, White said: "I don't think that one was originally planned. It was something that was kind of an opportunity that popped up where they were like, oh, there's something, we could do that."

Peyton Thibodeau, a day-one customer at the new Ponder location, said that their success could be because of the company's partnership with CMU Dining. She said being able to use flex dollars at the different locations made it more appealing.

Customers at both locations preferred Ponder's coffee over any other place in the area, and several mentioned that they only ever go there for coffee anymore.

"It's my favorite place on campus," Barrow said.

Paige Murphy, a Ponder Coffee employee, said the the new location was an amazing move for the business.

She relocated to the Health Professions site to assist in getting the new location up and running.

"I've been here for about a year and a half, so to see it expand is great for everybody," she said. "It's really exciting."

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Washington/Ojibway	:44	:14	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Anspach/Pearce	:45	:15	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Ronan/Grawn	:47	:17	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
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TJ Maxx			UPON REQUEST
Walmart			UPON REQUEST
Copper Beech	:26	:56	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
The Reserve	:28	:58	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Jamestown	:30	:00	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Yorkshire Commons	:33	:03	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Music Bldg. - Lot#33	**:42**	**:12**	**EVERY 1/2 HOUR**

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Theunissen Stadium Lot#70	:27	:57	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Communter Lot #75	:29	:59	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
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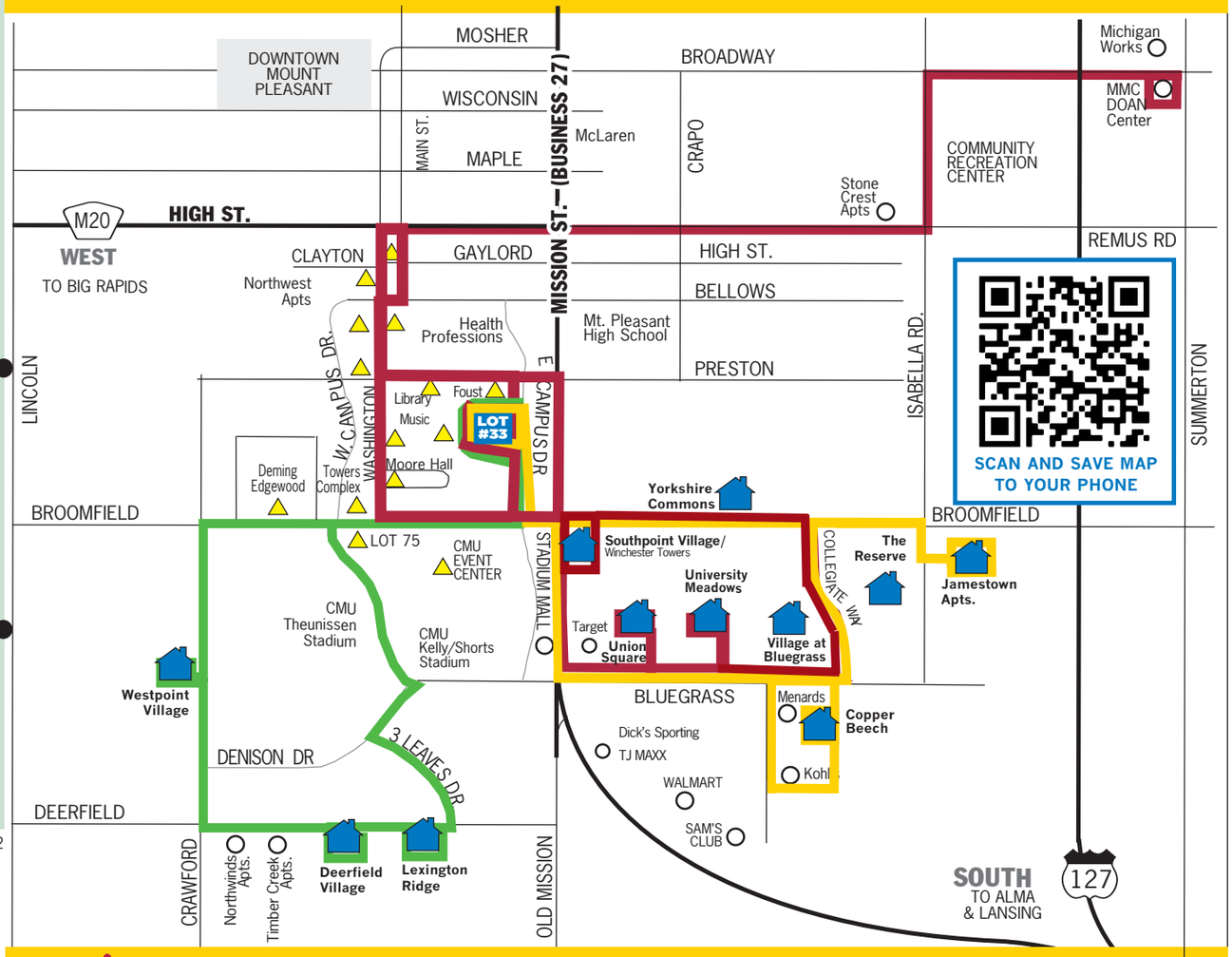

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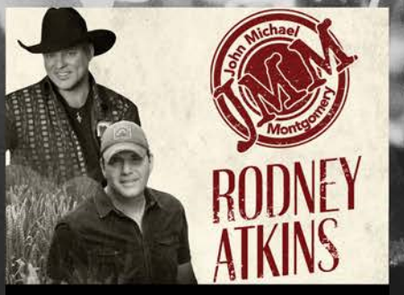

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